

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
2101 Constitution Avenue, Wash., D. C.

PACIFIC SCIENCE BOARD

16 17 Jan 51

Brig. Gen. Edwin L. Sibert
Dir. of Staff
Inter-American Defense Board
2600 - 16th St. N. W.
Wash., D. C.

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On my trip to Japan last year I received info which led me to believe
that there are important studies which were made by Japanese specialists in
various scientific fields, including anthropology

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Harold J. Coolidge

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FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Washington 25, D.C.

October 13, 1950

Dr. Harold J. Coolidge
Pacific Science Board
National Research Council
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Coolidge:

Your recent expression of interest in the utilization of Japanese information on areas formerly studied by Japanese scientists was of great interest to me. The matter is one of great importance and warrants immediate attention. There exist vast accumulations of data gathered by the Japanese from lands in and around the Pacific Basin. Many of these findings exist in inaccessible journals or in manuscript or notebook form. Since the end of the war such information has not been advanced by the research workers who can no longer enter the areas concerned. Some data have doubtless been lost, dispersed, or destroyed already. Further passage of time can only make salvage operations more difficult and costly.

As you may be aware, I recently returned from three years in Japan as biologist in the Scientific and Technical Division, Economic and Scientific Section, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Among my responsibilities during this three year period was the collection, appraisal, and abstracting of many Japanese scientific papers. A summary of this project will be found in Report No. 19, Science and Technology in Japan, published in 1949. A few fields were exhaustively covered, one of which will be described later. The Natural Resources Section gave considerable attention to Japanese documentation in fisheries, agriculture, forestry, and mineral resources. However, the time limitations and specific requirements of these programs inevitably left many fields untouched and gave only partial coverage of others. To my knowledge the Japanese work in the social sciences did not receive systematic, comprehensive examination nor documentation.

The armed services made systematic accumulations of published journal series in 1945-46. Subject matter bearing on military techniques (ordnance, chemical warfare, order of battle, etc.) undoubtedly received careful scrutiny by G2 and Navy Intelligence. However, I understand that large quantities of literature were shipped in bulk to Washington and have not been systematically catalogued nor utilized.

The greatest treasure trove is still unexplored — the routine, unclassified Japanese reports of observations in all parts of the former Japanese Empire. Scientists went to all parts of the Pacific and into Manchuria and southern Asia. It seems foolish indeed for our research workers and analysts to attempt the accumulation of data already reported by the Japanese in their published works or personal manuscripts.

My views regarding a practical method of approach might be of interest to you. Let me cite an example of documentation, and the procedure used. In late 1949 American research workers expressed interest in Japanese research in environmental physiology and clothing requirements. Instead of citing a few current papers published by the Japanese in this field, it was decided to exhaustively document all Japanese

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research, fundamental and applied, dealing with environmental physiology and related fields. The result was the publication in 1950 of Report No. 21, Science and Technology in Japan, entitled, "A Conspectus of Japanese Research in Environmental Physiology and Closely Related Fields". Most of the work was done voluntarily by the most capable Japanese authorities in the field of physiology. Professional American personnel contacted key Japanese research workers and pointed out the abysmal world ignorance regarding Japanese work in that field, due either to barriers imposed by the Japanese language or by publication in obscure journals. The Japanese scholars were eager to solve this problem. They located, supplemented, and translated Japanese bibliographies and indices on the subject. Included were papers reporting studies on tropical islands of the Pacific and the arctic areas of Manchuria, fatigue and clothing observations on Japanese soldier in Sumatra and Japanese pilots over China. Military journals, labor magazines, and professional biological publications were all examined and indexed. The draft was then carefully checked by Nisei translators, and organized in more usable fashion. Information was added to guide non-Japanese workers to any publication in which a reference had been cited. The resultant report has given dignity to the Japanese research and encourages utilization of the information by many non-Japanese students and research personnel.

The limited number of Japanese libraries, both institutional and private, were tragically decimated in 1945. Libraries in Japan have suffered further during the postwar period of economic strain. Additional delay will mean continued loss through neglect and disinterest. Early action should be taken while some of the American professional personnel in Japan can still assist in establishing invaluable contacts with capable Japanese scientists.

Logical steps in a comprehensive program might include:

1. Delimitation of the fields of interest. Priority must be given to fields where pre-war Japanese interest has waned, with resultant threats to accumulations of notes, unpublished manuscripts, and rare periodicals. Due to the secretive habits of many Japanese technicians and scientists, many research results exist only in the form of private notes and manuscripts withdrawn from the laboratories upon their dissolution.
2. Elimination of fields already covered adequately by SCAP and other agencies.
3. Cataloguing and publicizing Japanese literature now in the United States, to include accumulations made by military agencies and now presumably in dead storage.
4. Locating in Japan all pertinent notes, manuscripts, and publications, utilizing Japanese help.
5. Location of, or preparation of, journal and book lists in the priority fields.
6. Translations of titles and references of pertinent articles in the most promising journal series, using Japanese translators.
7. Preparation of informational abstracts, using Japanese abstractors.
8. Checking (scanning) of all translations, references, and abstracts by capable American personnel (the best man to organize this phase may be Mr. George Yamashiro, still employed by ESE/ST, GHO, SCAP).
9. Final bibliographic organization and publication of material, including lists of information sources and repositories.

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If the hoped for action which you expressed in our recent conversation can be implemented, results can best be achieved while the occupation of Japan is still in effect. I do not refer to any use of pressure or compulsion to reveal information sources. Such an approach would be undignified and almost completely fruitless. I refer instead to many details concerning personnel and logistics which might best be accomplished at once. Certain types of information can be found only by personal contact of American scholars with their Japanese equivalents. Other information, including locating individuals and documents connected with Japanese activities outside the home islands, may best be made available through United States military liaison with the Japanese Demobilization Bureau or other agencies. Both military and non-military channels should be used.

My best wishes in your valuable effort to accomplish this task before time lapses renders it impossible. If I can be of any help, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

s/

Bruce Plotech

Donald J. Plotech
Public Health Adviser
Division of International Health

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REMARKS: Attached are a letter from Mr. Coolidge to Gen. Sibert and a letter from Mr. Fletsch to Mr. Coolidge which may be of use to you in your meeting with Mr. Coolidge.

It is suggested that [redacted] of OPC attend the meeting as he has done some work on this project.

G. G. C.